

these schoolchildren have a better understanding of the meaning of the freedom of speech than some federal judges.

Mr. Speaker, we are trying to spread a message of hope, opportunity, and freedom around the world. I support this legislation so that we don't lose the ability to have that message shared among the American people.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1606, legislation that will exempt blogs, e-mail and other online speech from campaign finance laws.

When Congress passed campaign finance reform in 2002, the legislation did not identify political speech over the Internet as a target of the new regulations. The proponents of the law argued its intent was to restrict money not speech. But in April a federal judge sided with campaign finance reform zealots and ruled the FEC cannot completely exempt online speech from the requirements of the Campaign Finance Reform law.

I'm not here to revisit arguments for or against campaign finance reform.

I'm here today to call for Congress to recognize the Internet as a safe harbor for political speech.

Everyday thousands of bloggers register displeasure or support with Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, even their local elected officials.

But now, we are on the cusp of a new FEC regulation that could stifle free expression.

Without Congressional action today, arbitrary restrictions would be imposed on blogs and other web content deterring participation from the very segment of our population that we want to encourage to be politically active.

Thomas Jefferson was right when he said: "The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right."

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will protect, in its infancy, what could be a powerful medium (or media) for the opinion of the people to be heard.

The way our Nation communicates today is almost unrecognizable for those of us that were in Washington, DC during the 1970s.

We have seen the innovation and democratization of the Internet in just the last decade. This legislation will promote democracy and shutter those who intend to manage through regulation this amazing engine of communication and knowledge.

The Internet, through such safe havens of individual expression and opinion like blogs, has put the power in the hands of the people, where it truly belongs, precisely where Thomas Jefferson wanted it.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for introducing this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PUTNAM). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1606.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4061) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology within the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing for the Chief Information Officer of that Department to have authority over resources, budget, and personnel related to the support function of information technology, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4061

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) RESOURCES, BUDGET, AND PERSONNEL AUTHORITY OF CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER.—Section 310 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(c) To support the economical, efficient, and effective execution of the information technology objectives, policies, and plans of the Department in support of Department goals, the Secretary shall ensure that the Chief Information Officer has the authority and control necessary for the development, approval, implementation, integration, and oversight of policies, procedures, processes, activities, and systems of the Department relating to the management of information technology for the Department, including the management of all related mission applications, information resources, personnel, and infrastructure.

"(d)(1) The Secretary, acting through the Chief Information Officer, shall develop, implement, and maintain a process for the selection and oversight of information technology for the Department.

"(2) As components of the development of the process required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall develop for the Department—

"(A) an information technology strategic plan that includes performance measurements; and

"(B) an integrated enterprise architecture.

"(3) The information technology strategic plan shall set forth a multiyear plan for the use of information technology and related resources to support the accomplishment of the Department's mission.

"(4) The Chief Information Officer shall review and update the information technology strategic plan and the integrated enterprise architecture on an ongoing basis to maintain the currency of the plan and the currency of the enterprise architecture with technological changes and changing mission needs of the Department.

"(e)(1) Funds may be obligated for information technology for the Department only in accordance with the process implemented

under paragraph (1) or as otherwise specifically authorized or delegated by the Chief Information Officer or as otherwise directed by the Secretary.

"(2)(A) Amounts appropriated for the Department for any fiscal year that are available for information technology shall be allocated within the Department, consistent with the provisions of appropriations Acts, in such manner as may be specified by, or approved by, the Chief Information Officer.

"(B) If for any fiscal year amounts referred to in subparagraph (A) that are available for the Veterans Health Administration (or are otherwise available for functions relating to medical care) are to be allocated under subparagraph (A) in a manner that is inconsistent with the allocation method known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation, such allocation may be made only with the approval of the Secretary and after the Under Secretary for Health is notified.

"(3) When the budget for any fiscal year is submitted by the President to Congress under section 1105 of title 31, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that identifies amounts requested for information technology for the Department. The report shall set forth those amounts both for each Administration within the Department and for the Department in the aggregate and shall identify, for each such amount, how that amount is aligned with and supports the information technology strategic plan under subsection (d), as then in effect.

"(f)(1) The Chief Information Officer shall select the Chief Information Officer for each of the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. Any such selection may only be made after consultation with the Under Secretary with responsibility for the Administration for which the selection is to be made.

"(2) Each Administration Chief Information Officer selected under paragraph (1)—

"(A) shall be designated as a Department Deputy Chief Information Officer; and

"(B) shall report to the Department Chief Information Officer.

"(3) The Department Deputy Chief Information Officers are responsible for implementing in their respective Administrations, as directed by the Department Chief Information Officer, the information technology strategic plan and the integrated enterprise architecture developed for the Department by the Department Chief Information Officer pursuant to subsection (d)(2).

"(4) To accomplish the policies, programmatic goals, information technology system acquisitions, and alignments prescribed, authorized, or directed by the Department Chief Information Officer, each Department Deputy Chief Information Officer shall maintain, for their respective Administrations, operational control of all information technology system assets and personnel necessary, including direct management of the Administration's software and applications development activities.

"(5) The Department Deputy Chief Information Officers—

"(A) shall be the principal advocate for the information technology needs of their respective Administrations; and

"(B) shall assure, by coordinating with the Department Chief Information Officer, that the business and mission needs of their respective Administrations are met by considering requirements at all levels.

"(g)(1) The Secretary shall ensure that the annual report submitted by the Secretary pursuant to section 11313 of title 40 includes an identification of any obligation approved by the Chief Information Officer under subsection (e)(1), including the date, amount, and purpose of such obligation.

“(2) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives an annual report, not later than March 1 of each year (beginning in 2009), providing the Secretary’s assessment of the implementation during the year covered by the report of the provisions of subsections (c), (d), and (e). Each such report shall include—

“(A) the assessment of the Secretary as to increased efficiency within the Department of information technology acquisition processes, management, responsibility, and accountability as a result of those provisions; and

“(B) estimated cost savings to the Department as a result of those provisions.

“(h) In this section, the term ‘information technology’ has the meaning given that term in paragraph (6) of section 11101 of title 40.”.

(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORTS.—

(A) REPORTS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress progress reports on the implementation of subsections (c), (d), and (e), of section 310 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(B) TIME FOR PROGRESS REPORTS.—A report under subparagraph (A) shall be submitted as expeditiously as feasible after the end of the 60-day period, the 90-day period, and the 180-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) MATTER TO BE INCLUDED.—Each report under this paragraph shall set out the progress to date on the implementation of the provisions specified in subparagraph (A).

(2) INTERIM REPORTS.—After the completion of the first 12 months, and after the completion of the first 18 months, of the implementation of the provisions specified in paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall submit to Congress an interim report on the operation of those provisions to that date. Each such report shall include the following:

(A) The assessment of the Secretary as to increased efficiency within the Department of Veterans Affairs of information technology acquisition processes, management, responsibility, and accountability.

(B) Estimated cost savings to the Department as a result of those provisions.

(3) FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than January 1, 2008, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a final report on the implementation of the provisions specified in paragraph (1)(A). The Secretary shall include in that report the matters specified in paragraph (2) and the Secretary’s recommendation for any modifications to information technology management within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4061, the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act. I, along with the committee’s ranking member, LANE EVANS, along with other members of the committee, introduced this legislation on October 17 of 2005.

Over the last several years, the Veterans’ Affairs Committee has worked

extremely hard on this groundbreaking legislation. We believe its passage will greatly assist the VA to improve its efforts to achieve the one VA mission. The VA has long had a problem with stove-piped administrations that veterans must deal with as though they are separate parts of the government.

Since coming to Congress, I have witnessed the VA’s inability to adequately manage its IT funding and IT modernization efforts. In fact, the VA’s IT modernization efforts go back at least 20 years, to 1985 when it was the policy of the Veterans Administration to provide “better service to the veteran through modern technology.”

Unfortunately, the Department has annually requested and spent billions of dollars without accountability or measurable performance outcomes on IT modernization, and America’s veterans are still waiting for the “one VA.”

According to GAO, the VA spent approximately \$10 billion over the last decade alone for VA IT spending, and this is probably a very conservative figure. Historically, the VA has included funding for IT in its general administration accounts of each of the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration.

What that really means is that the VA has been spending billions of dollars on three separate IT infrastructures within the Department. For example, the Health Administration, the autonomy is downstream to the VISIONS and then on to the hospitals with their own operating systems.

To take a second example down further is what happened with Katrina when they took the medical records from New Orleans and they then transferred them within the same VISION, VISION 16, and downloaded the medical records at the Houston VA. They had to be reconfigured when they were brought to Houston. That is just within a same VISION.

To make matters worse, these three separate IT infrastructures within the VA cannot efficiently and effectively share important information. For our veterans this is a significant and unacceptable convenience.

Ultimately, centralizing the VA IT organizational structure will allow the VA to better serve our veterans. The VA absolutely needs to modernize its IT, both in hardware and software, and it should be the vehicle and tools of efficiency.

□ 1515

When there is truly One-VA with modern IT support, it will provide a seamless transition of our military being treated at the VA hospital as he or she move in and out of that system, whether it be back to active duty status or to veterans status. We will also improve timely medical appointments and reduce waiting time. It will foster better patient safety through updated and correct medical data. It will have

faster and more accurate claims processing and afford timely benefits delivery of all VA benefits, such as VA home loans and GI Bill education benefits.

Equally important, the cost of VA’s inability to manage its IT programs and initiatives has resulted in some significant IT failures: as much as \$600 million-plus for a decade of VETSNET, the automated compensation and pension claims processing system that still has not been implemented after 10 years of development efforts; \$342 million for CoreFLS, the failed financial management system; \$300 million for the HR Links, the failed automated personnel system; \$485 million annually to maintain VISTA, VA’s 25-year-old medical information system.

In 1996, Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996, legislation that created the position of chief information officer for Federal agencies. The provisions of the bill were later renamed the Clinger-Cohen Act.

In 2001, 5 years after this mandate, the Department of Veterans Affairs became the last Cabinet-level Department to comply with the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act and appoint a full-time chief information officer.

In 2003, then-Secretary Principi directed VA to centralize its IT processes to better align IT management. It did not happen.

In 2004, the VA hired Gartner Consulting, a Fortune 500 IT consultant, to analyze and review its IT infrastructure and processes. In testimony before the Veterans’ Affairs full committee in September 2005, Gartner testified that the VA’s IT budgets are very fluid, without much accountability on how and when funding is spent. Gartner analyzed several organizational models, including no change or the status quo to help VA resolve its IT issue.

Two of the models have the greatest potential application to the VA. One that the VA advocated is called a “federated model,” where centralized planning, technology operations, and budgeting/financial are controlled by a chief information officer with business applications developed and supported by application teams in each business line. But it still preserves the stovepipes.

Then you have what is called the “centralized model,” where all VA IT is organized into a single entity reporting to a chief information officer. Key functional entities reporting directly to the CIO include business applications, infrastructure and operations, customer relations, enterprise architecture, data and information management, security management, and IT finance.

According to VA’s own consultant, the centralized approach provides the greatest opportunity to successfully execute the One-VA mission objectives. It maximizes asset utilization and achieves economies of scale across all of VA by managing the infrastructure

through a central function; and through common organization, it will more rapidly mature the IT investment management processes across the VA's IT program portfolio. The bill in front of us is the centralized approach that has also been endorsed by Gartner Consulting to the VA.

Furthermore, Gartner testified that the centralized approach could save the VA \$345 million annually, or more than \$1.7 billion over 5 years.

Gartner also estimated that the cost to VA for reorganizing IT will be \$14 million. Even if the implementation cost is doubled and the estimated savings are too optimistic and halved, the return on investment will be approximately three to one, and this is from one of the leading IT consultants in the world, the very consultant on which the Fortune 500 companies rely.

Despite these findings and recommendations, the VA has now decided to adopt a federated approach and they really do not need Congress to act, that we are going to do this all on our own. Quite frankly, VA's plan looks like the Department wants to carry on, really, business as usual, but give it a title. On a bipartisan basis, we find this completely unacceptable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am also putting the Department on notice.

My advice to the Under Secretary of the Veterans Health Administration, Dr. Perlin, is to cease and desist in his staunch efforts to push for this federated model.

My advice to the Under Secretary of the Veterans Benefits Administration, Admiral Cooper, is to stop his efforts to adopt a federated approach.

My advice to the newly designated Under Secretary of the National Cemetery Administration, William Turk, is not to proceed with the federated approach.

Earlier this year, the Veterans' Committee recommended that Congress withhold \$400 million for VA IT because the Department has poorly managed its major IT initiative. Furthermore, the Department has not held anyone accountable when multimillion dollar projects fail.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my distinguished colleague and the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs (Mr. WALSH) for adopting our recommendation and withholding \$383 million from the fiscal 2006 budget.

If the Department of Veterans Affairs continues down this path of disregard for this legislative body, we have no choice. We will continue to recommend withholding a portion of VA's IT budget until the CIO is allowed to instill a disciplined and accountability approach to the VA's IT budget and that it be done on a centralized approach.

Congress should not tolerate the continued mismanagement of the precious veterans resources on failed IT programs within the Department. Allow the CIO to do his job.

Ultimately, this bill will empower the CIO with the authority over IT's budgets, equipment, and personnel. This legislation is long overdue, and I urge my colleagues to support this important effort.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support H.R. 4061 and encourage my colleagues to approve this legislation. I also want to thank our chairman and the ranking member for their leadership and the hard work of the staff on both sides of the aisle.

This bill helps the Department of Veterans Affairs construct a balanced, responsive, and accountable system to manage information technology at the VA.

This legislation is necessary to overcome a mindset at the VA regarding the management of information technology that increasingly is defined by clouded management processes and a lack of accountability within the three principal administrations.

In just the last decade, VA has expended hundreds of millions of dollars to field information technology systems that were discontinued due to misalignment with VA's mission, mismanagement or serious cost overruns. Under H.R. 4061, this will change.

The Department will receive a centralized framework to manage IT assets throughout the Department in pursuit of its One-VA initiative. Information technology will be managed by a highly qualified VA-wide information technology team that will ultimately report to a chief information officer, or CIO.

The CIO will have control of the budget, assets, personnel, and systems necessary to achieve success department-wide, but there is an express understanding that information technology in VA is a support function. It is not a final goal. Measures of effectiveness across the administrations will be tracked and should demonstrate that VA has become a more effective organization.

Also under this bill, a deputy CIO will be assigned to each of the three administrations. In this capacity, they are the principal advocates for the business and mission needs of the respective administration at all levels of use, from senior managers to end-users throughout the field. This requirement will facilitate innovation and fine-tune the design of the IT infrastructure.

The deputy CIO will be responsible to the Department CIO for IT system alignment and related matters, but will otherwise be in control of day-to-day IT operations in their respective administration.

I would like to congratulate again the staffs from each side of the aisle for working out this improved IT management system for VA, and I am glad to be an original cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and also for his leadership in bringing this bill forward and for his leadership as chairman of the Veterans' Committee.

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 4061, I rise in support of the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005.

This legislation calls for a strategic plan that includes performance measures and an integrated enterprise architecture, working to create greater accountability within VA.

Money spent by VA in its modernization efforts has been costly. For example, VA spends \$485 million annually to maintain VISTA, VA's 25-year-old medical information system. It does not seem economical to spend \$485 million each year on out-of-date computer application systems in the 21st century.

Passage of H.R. 4061 would build on the work of the committee over the past few Congresses in expecting accountability of VA's people and resources and for the IT programs of the Department.

Restructured IT management at VA will have an impact on VA's ability to provide services to veterans more quickly and effectively. Subsequently, it will help improve the health care of our Nation's veterans. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, it is my mission to ensure our veterans have the quality health care they have earned and deserve.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), our ranking Democratic member of the committee.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, the need for this bill has been growing for more than a decade.

The Department of Veterans Affairs usually does a reasonable job managing programs of interest to veterans, but it does not do well in managing information technology programs.

Significant funding was invested in VA information technology programs that later failed due mostly to mismanagement. If VA had in place the sound management processes required by this bill, many of those information technology failures could have likely been avoided.

This would be better for the taxpayer, and it would be better for the mission of VA, and most importantly, it would give us an opportunity to thank our veterans who served more than they anticipated in the Armed Forces.

I want to thank Chairman BUYER for keeping our Nation's commitment focused on this initiative. The bill language contains the checks and balances needed to successfully manage information technology at the VA. It will

allow us in Congress to track how VA manages its information technology assets.

I cosponsored this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" in support.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS for bringing this important bill to the attention of the House of Representatives.

This legislation will empower the chief information officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs to control and influence information technology in the Department.

I fully support H.R. 4061 and am very pleased to be an original cosponsor.

This bill helps the Department of Veterans Affairs construct a balanced, responsive, and accountable system to manage information technology at VA.

As we have all seen from the emergencies that have recently affected this country, it is important for all of the computers to be able to communicate with each other in every region. A veteran needs to know that he or she will be served when they enter any VA facility.

Under this bill, we are taking the first steps to make sure this happens.

I encourage my colleagues to approve this legislation.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), a member of the committee.

□ 1530

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 4061, the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005. This important legislation would provide the Chief Information Officer at the Department of Veterans Affairs with future authority over information technology budgets, equipment and personnel.

Importantly, this legislation will centralize information technology at the Department, increasing the ability of the Department to serve veterans by providing information more productively, and improve the delivery of health care to Veterans.

Under this legislation, claims for veterans will be processed more speedily, waiting times for medical care will be reduced, all veterans benefits will be delivered more quickly, and medical data for veterans will be improved through more rapid updating. In short, this legislation will not only improve information technology at the Department but will make a real difference in improving the delivery of health care and other benefits for our Nation's veterans.

This legislation will allow our veterans to save time in accessing the benefits to which they are entitled, improving their experiences at the VA

and improving their quality of life. Should this legislation become law, the Department of Veterans Affairs may improve information technology management at the Department and help better serve our veterans.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH).

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 4061, the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act. This bill helps the VA construct a balanced, responsive and accountable system to manage information technology at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department Chief Information Officer will be given the control and resources necessary to manage information technology department-wide. Measures of effectiveness across the administrations will be tracked and should demonstrate that VA has become a more effective organization. The CIO will have control of the budget, assets, personnel and systems necessary to achieve this success.

Also under the bill, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) noted, a Deputy CIO will be assigned to each of the three administrations. In this capacity, they are the principal advocates for the business and mission needs of their respective administrations at all levels of use, from senior managers to end-users throughout the field. The Deputy CIO will be responsible to the Department CIO for IT system alignment and related matters but will otherwise be in control of day-to-day IT operations in their respective administration.

I, too, would like to congratulate Chairman BUYER, Ranking Member EVANS, their staffs and all Members who worked hard on working out this improved IT management system for the VA. I am glad to be a cosponsor of this bill which will help our veterans.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the ranking member and Marine, LANE EVANS, for his work and cooperation on this bipartisan legislation. This is the way the committee is supposed to work.

We have invested almost 6 years of work on this to bring corrections to IT systems, and I am glad that we have been able to work together in a bipartisan fashion to deliver a product to this floor for which we can be proud of.

I would also like to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the chairman and ranking members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, for their hard work in providing the oversight required to define these problematic issues and helping to make needed legislative changes to address these shortcomings at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I would also like to reiterate my thanks to the gentleman from New

York (Mr. WALSH) for his support in bringing accountability to VA's IT programs within the appropriations process.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), Army Vietnam vet, for his work on this and the original cosponsorship, along with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) and the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH).

Finally, I would also like to thank Art Wu, Len Sistek, Kimo Hollingsworth, Ginny Richardson, and Risa Salsburg for their diligence and dedication in serving our Nation's veterans on the committee, and also the staff directors, Jim Lariviere and Jim Holley, both for the majority and the minority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005. This is a bill whereby when we come to this body we do not leave our experiences behind. We are to learn from the past and to plan for the future. We are to modernize Federal governments, to cut through the bureaucracy, and to create workable solutions that will become a standard that will be leveraged across all departments of the government, creating greater efficiencies, responsiveness to people, and saving money. That is exactly what this product has done, and it is being brought to the floor in a bipartisan fashion, and so I ask all my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4061.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4061.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

JOHN H. BRADLEY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill